

The Ark

Safeguarding Children Policy

A Safeguarding Children Policy is required by law for all nurseries, playgroups and childcare providers.

The Ark and its entire staff have a duty to be aware that abuse does occur in our society. This statement lays out the procedures that will be taken if we have reason to believe that a child in our care is subject to either emotional, physical or sexual abuse or neglect.

Our primary responsibility is the welfare and well being of all children in our care. As such we believe we have a duty to the children, parents/main carers and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention.

The Ark has a duty to report any suspicions around abuse to Social Services whether this stems from allegations against staff, volunteers, carers or the general public. The Children Act 1989 (Section 47(1)) places a duty on Social Services to investigate such matters. The Ark will follow the procedures set out in the Social Services Safeguarding Children Documents and as such will seek their advice on all steps taken subsequently.

The Ark will notify Ofsted if Social Services are investigating a safeguarding children matter related to the group. Our local Social Services office is the North Dorset Local Office at Bath Road, Sturminster Newton, Dorset DT10 1DR, tel. 01258 472652.

The designated member of staff for safeguarding children is Pauline Pinkney.

Pauline will take the lead in dealing with any concerns raised initially, and will then decide whether to take advice from outside agencies such as social services, and the police. If it is decided to discuss such issues with the parents/carers of the child this staff member will facilitate the discussions (although no discussions will take place if it is believed this would place the child at risk of significant harm).

An allegation of child abuse or neglect could lead to a criminal investigation so staff will not do anything that may jeopardise a police investigation, for example, ask a child leading questions or attempt to investigate the allegations of abuse.

Social Services takes the lead role in enquiring about safeguarding children issues related to the child whilst the employer retains the responsibility for disciplinary actions related to their staff member, volunteer or carer.

1. Physical Abuse

Action will be taken under this heading if the staffs have reason to believe that there has been a physical injury to a child, including deliberate poisoning, where there is a definite knowledge, or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

Procedure

- a. Any sign of a mark/injury to a child when they come *into* Pre-School/Nursery will be recorded by the designated member of staff for safeguarding children liaison, discussed with the parent, and the parent will be asked to countersign a record.
- b. The incident will be discussed with the parent/main carer.
- c. Such discussion will be recorded and the parent/main carer will have access to such records.
(Discussion will take place unless it is believed that this would place the child at risk of significant harm)
- d. If there appear to be any queries regarding the injury Social Services and/or the police will be notified

2. Sexual Abuse

Action will be taken under this heading if the staff team have witnessed occasions where a child indicated sexual activity through words, play and drawing or had an excessive pre-occupation with sexual matters or had an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour.

Procedure

The observed instances will be reported by the designated member of staff for safeguarding children liaison to Social Services and /or the police.

3. Emotional Abuse

Action will be taken under this heading if the staff team have reason to believe that there is a severe, adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child caused by persistent or severe ill treatment or rejection or bullying.

Procedure

- a. The concern will be discussed with the parent/main carer by the designated member of staff for safeguarding children liaison
- b. Such discussion will be recorded and the parent/main carer will have access to such records.
(Discussion will take place unless it is believed that this would place the child at risk of significant harm)
- c. If there appear to be any queries regarding the circumstances, the matter will be referred to Social Services and /or the police.

4. Neglect

Action will be taken under this heading if the staff team have reason to believe that there has been persistent or severe neglect of a child (for example, by exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation) which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development, including unexplained failure to thrive.

Procedure

- a. The concern will be discussed with the parent/main carer by the designated member of staff for safeguarding children liaison.
- b. Such discussion will be recorded and the parent/main carer will have access to such records.
(Discussion will take place unless it is believed that this would place the child at risk of significant harm)
- c. If there appear to be any queries regarding the circumstances Social Services and /or the police will be notified.

5. Unauthorised Collection of Children

If a parent who does not have custody arrives to collect a child the procedure below should be followed:

If the child is inside the building

Administrator/other staff member should use the intercom to talk to the parent. If the parent has succeeded in entering the building, the child should be escorted to the school premises via a door other than the main front door.

The parent with custody should be alerted by telephone to come and collect. If any aggression is displayed the police should be called.

If the child is outside the building

One staff member to take the child inside the building, closing the door behind them, and leaving the remaining children outside with other staff members. The parent with custody should be alerted by telephone to come and collect. If any aggression is displayed the police should be called. If the parent remains outside the building, the children outside should be escorted back in via the school.

Allegations against member of staff or volunteer

Action will be taken under this heading if allegations of child abuse/neglect are made against a member of staff or volunteer working at the Group. Please also see Complaints Procedure on page 23.

Procedure

- a. The concern will be discussed with the parent/main carer by the designated member of staff for safeguarding children liaison, unless that is the member of staff concerned, in which case the deputy will act as designated member.
- b. Such discussion will be recorded and the parent /main carer will have access to such records.
- c. The designated staff member will report the incident to their employer (e.g. owner, committee).
- d. The employer will need to decide how far to discuss it with the accused member of staff/volunteer without involving outside agencies, bearing in mind that an allegation of child abuse or neglect could lead to a criminal investigation. Therefore they should not do anything that may jeopardise a police investigation, for example, ask a child leading questions or attempt to investigate the allegations of abuse.
- e. The employer may decide to contact Social Services for guidance and follow their advice.
- f. The employer will need to decide whether to suspend the member of staff/volunteer pending Investigations.
- g. If there appear to be any issues or concerns regarding the circumstances Social Services and /or the police will be notified. The matter will also be reported to Ofsted and the Local Authority Safeguarding Children unit.

Confidentiality

The aim of this childcare setting is to promote an environment of respect with reference to confidential information relating to the children, families or group users and the groups business (please see our confidentiality policy.) However, if it becomes necessary to disclose information concerning a child and/or member of staff (if the allegation is made against a staff member/volunteer) to an outside agency, the following procedure will be followed:

- a. The consent of the parent/main carer of that child and/or the consent of the staff member to the disclosure will be sought first (unless it is believed that obtaining such consent would place the child at risk of significant harm).
- b. If it is believed that obtaining such consent would place the child at risk of significant harm, the disclosure will be made without obtaining consent (bearing in mind the public interest in safeguarding the child's welfare overrides the need to keep information confidential).

PLEASE NOTE:

THERE ARE EXCEPTIONS TO THE ABOVE PROCEDURES. IF ANY CHILD IS THOUGHT TO BE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER, PRE-SCHOOL STAFF WILL CONTACT SOCIAL SERVICES AND/OR THE POLICE IMMEDIATELY.